THE NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • THURSDAY • SEPTEMBER 15, 2022 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

AI EXPRESS PLANE CATCHES FIRE AT MUSCAT AIRPORT, NO CASUALTIES

All 151 people on board were evacuated from the aircraft after fire and smoke were spotted in one of the engines

SOME PASSENGERS HURT DURING EVACUATION

The incident happened when the Kochi-bound Boeing 737-800 aircraft was taxiing. Slides were deployed to evacuate the people on board, some of whom suffered minor bruises during the process. There were 141 passengers, 4 infants and 6 crew members on board the aircraft. Air India Express has arranged a relief flight to bring back the guests from Muscat

DGCA TO PROBE THE INCIDENT, TAKE ACTION

- According to reports, the smoke alarm did not go off and there was no fire warning in the cockpit either. It was the crew of another aircraft who noticed the smoke and raised alarm
- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation said it is investigating and appropriate action will be taken after the probe is over

Tata Group
IS THE CURRENT OWNER OF AIR INDIA EXPRESS, EARLIER A GOVT CARRIER

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

No definition, can't bar parties for hate speech: ECI

The poll watchdog's counter-affidavit to the Supreme Court points out that even the Law Commission ducked the exercise to define it

SHRUTI KAKKAR @ New Delhi

THE Election Commission of India has told the Supreme Court that it doesn't have the legal power to de-recognise political parties or de-register candidates for 'hate speech'.

Pointing out that hate speech has not been defined under any existing law in India, the poll body said in its affidavit, "In the absence of any specific law governing 'hate speech' and 'rumour mongering' during elections, the Election Commission of India employs various provisions of IPC and the RP Act, 1951 to ensure of that members of political parties or even other persons do not make statements to the effect of creating disharmony between different sections of society."

The ECI's counter-affidavit was in response to a plea by BJP leader Ashwini Upadhyay seeking directions to the Centre to take measures to curb hate speech. ECI's affidavit pointed out that in the case of Pravasai Bhilai Sanghatan Vs Union of India (2014), the Supreme Court referred the question of whether the ECI should be conferred the power to re-recognise a political party or disqualify its members for hate speech, to the Law Commission of India. The SC also asked the Law Commission to define hate speech and make recommendations to Parliament to curb the menace but the Commission's 267th Report did not answer the court's question, the affidavit pointed out.

The ECI said it has made amendments to the Model Code of Conduct and whenever it learns about a candidate or an agent indulging in hate speech, it takes strict note and issues show-cause notice.

In its affidavit, the poll body said that it has prepared a list of do's and don'ts to be followed by political parties and contesting candidates during elections. "The Election Commission of India has further directed that this be given the widest possible publicity in the official language of the State and its contents brought to the knowledge of all candidates and political parties," the affidavit read.

LAWS THAT HAVE A BEARING ON HATE SPEECH

Indian Penal Code

153A: Promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language

295A: Deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings

298: Uttering words with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings

Representation of the People Act

Section 125: Promoting enmity between classes in connection with election

Chose Guj on professional advice, says Vedanta boss

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

IN a bid to douse the political fire over Vedanta's last-minute decision to shift its ₹1.5 lakh crore semiconductor project to Gujarat, the conglomerate's chairman Anil Agarwal took to Twitter on Wednesday to defend his decision. In a series of tweets, Agarwal said Vedanta and Foxconn were professionally assessing sites for a multi-billion dollar investment. He claimed this is a scientific and financial process which typically takes several years.

"We started this about two years ago. Our team of internal and external professional agencies shortlisted a few states — Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, TN etc to help achieve our purpose. For the last 2 years we have been engaging with each of these govts as well as central govt & have received fantastic support," he tweeted.

He said the company had decided on Gujarat a few months ago as the state met expectations. "We have to start in one place, and based on professional and independent advice we chose Gujarat," he said, adding that the Maharashtra government had also approached the company with a very competitive offer in a bid to outbid other states.

According to him, the multi-billion-dollar long-term project will change the course of Indian electronics. "We will create a pan-India ecosystem & are fully committed to investing in Maharashtra as well. Maharashtra will be our key to forward integration in our Gujarat JV," said Agarwal.

STATE GOVT TO TABLE BILL ON MAKING KANNADA COMPULSORY

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

WITH an aim to make use of Kannada language mandatory in the state, the government has decided to table a Bill in the ongoing session of the legislature, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai told the state assembly on Wednesday. The proposed Kannada Language Comprehensive Development Bill aims to introduce Kannada as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges and to create job reservation for Kannadigas in the government and private sectors.

The CM made the announcement after JDS members staged a protest against the imposition of Hindi language on Wednesday which was also observed as Hindi Divas across the country. The CM said no one can insist on imposition of any language in the state besides Kannada and even Prime Minister Narendra Modi has told that all regional languages are national languages.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai in the Assembly on Wednesday

"Our government is not just committed to safeguarding Kannada, but also to promoting it. In Karnataka, when it comes to land, water, language and people, we have kept politics aside and taken a collective decision even in the past," he said. The CM said there have been demands for making Kannada mandatory all these years. P4

State to privatise BMTC, KSRTC ops

Bengaluru: The state government is all set to privatise operations of state-owned road transport corporations including BMTC and KSRTC. The government which has initiated the process of shifting to electric buses is aiming to convert the entire fleet into electric buses by 2030, Transport Minister B Sriramulu said. He said buses will run on contract basis for a period of 12 years under Gross Cost Contract system as per which the vehicles will be owned and maintained by the bidder besides appointing its own in-house drivers. P4

Cong Chhodo, BJP Jodo Yatra in Goa as 8 MLAs defect to the ruling party

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

MAKING a complete mockery of their party's Bharat Jodo Yatra and calling themselves part of the Congress Chhodo, BJP Jodo Yatra instead, as many as eight of the total 11 MLAs in Goa Congress on Wednesday defected to the ruling party in the state.

The defectors included heavyweights like former chief minister Digambar Kamat and Congress Legislative Party (CLP) leader Michael Lobo.

The day began with Lobo calling a meeting of the CLP and adopting a resolution to merge with the BJP. The eight rebels attended the meeting. Three MLAs who skipped it and did not switch sides are Yuri Alemao, Altone D'Costa and Carlose Alvares Ferreira.

The rebels managed to duck the anti-defection law as their count was more than two-thirds of the total CLP strength (11x2/3 = 7.33).

Goa Congress MLAs joining the BJP in the presence of Chief Minister Pramod Sawant in Panaji on Wednesday | PTI

It's Op Kichad: Jairam

"Operation Kichad of BJP in Goa has been fast tracked because of the visible success of the Bharat Jodo Yatra. BJP is nervous," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh tweeted

Lobo, then, wrote to the secretary of the Goa Assembly announcing the merger.

Grinning from ear to ear, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said, "We had been waiting for this day for a long time." Sources said three ministers in the state would be asked to resign to accommodate the Congress rebels in the ministry.

Kamat claimed the decision to join the BJP was taken years ago, but circumstances forced them to wait till this day. Reminded about their oath and prayer at a holy place vowing not to leave the Congress ahead of the Assembly elections, Kamat cheekily said he went back to God, briefed him about the current situation in the party and asked him what to do.

"God told me to go ahead, I'm with you. Therefore, today, I left the Congress and joined the BJP as per God wish," Kamat quipped. In January, they had taken the loyalty pledge at a temple, church and dargah in Goa ahead of the elections.

Lobo claimed he had the BJP along with his wife to ensure the smooth functioning of the state government.

Lokayukta to have addl registrar, cabinet decides

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE State Cabinet on Wednesday approved the appointment of an additional registrar for Karnataka Lokayukta, besides filling vacancies to ensure speedy trial of cases by the investigative agency. The decision comes weeks after the state's Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) was scrapped by the Karnataka High Court and all the cases being probed by the ACB were transferred to the Lokayukta. The Lokayukta had sought additional staff to deal with the increased burden of cases. The Cabinet also took a decision to increase the salary of the Lokayukta on par with the salary of the Chief Justice of Karnataka.

Among other decisions, the Cabinet gave its nod for a revised estimation of Rs 862.37 crore allocation to complete the construction of warehouses and to strengthen infrastructure. The project has been taken up by the Karnataka State Warehousing Corporation.

The Cabinet decided to extend the lease period of government-run Kannada medium schools in Bengaluru which are housed in private buildings. Under the Centre's Jal Jeevan Mission, approval was given for the implementation of drinking water projects in Periyapatna at a cost of Rs 350 crore, Sagara (Rs 127 cr), Belagavi and Ramadurga (Rs 439 cr), K R Nagara (Rs 12.74 cr) and Nippani (Rs 49 cr) taluks.

The Cabinet also approved Rs 26.21 crore for the construction of a Railway Over Bridge (ROB) between Hospet-Kariganur stations on Hubballi-Ballari route and Rs 41.59 crore for a Railway Under Bridge (RUB) between Dharwad-Kyarakoppa on Hubballi-Londa route.

EXPRESS READ

HC relief for builder Sushil Mantri, son

BENGALURU: The Karnataka High Court on Wednesday stayed criminal proceedings being investigated by the CID against Mantri Developers PVT Ltd, its director Sushil P Mantri, and his son Prateek Mantri | P9

'Hijab ban forced 17k students to skip exams'

NEW DELHI: Advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, appearing for the Muslim students in the Karnataka hijab case, told the apex court that the ban had resulted in 17,000 students abstaining from taking examinations | P9

Exports rise marginally by 1.62 pc in August

NEW DELHI: India's exports rose marginally by 1.62% to $33.92 billion, while trade deficit more than doubled to $27.98 billion in August due to increased crude oil imports, commerce ministry data showed on Wednesday.

SC clears decks for Ganguly, Shah for 2nd innings

SHRUTI KAKKAR @ New Delhi

AFTER a long legal battle, the BCCI on Wednesday was allowed to tweak its constitution to pave the way for its president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah to continue in office for another term of three years. The Supreme Court gave the board permission to rework the clause in its constitution that prevented them from continuing in office without a mandatory cooling-off period.

Terming the provision of office-bearers requiring to undergo cooling-off period after completing one term of three years in a state association and one term (3 years) in BCCI as stringent, bench of justices D Y Chandrachud and Hima Kohli accepted BCCI's plea to waive the clause.

The SC also said the cooling-off period would now apply after two consecutive terms of three years in office in either state unit or in the BCCI. This means that an office-bearer in a state unit will have to undergo cooling-off if the person continues in the state unit but not if he/she moves to the BCCI.

Sourav Ganguly and Jay Shah

"Bearing in mind the purpose for which the cooling-off was included, we are of the considered view that proposed amendment would not dilute the object and purpose of introducing cooling-off period with the result that cooling-off will come to effect once a candidate has completed two consecutive terms in the BCCI and the state association. We therefore accept the proposed amendment," the court said in its order.

The bench also accepted the amendment for not disqualifying a person who holds any office or post in any federation apart from cricket from being an office bearer.

LIFE TERM

4 PEOPLE CONVICTED FOR SACRIFICING WOMAN

Four people were sentenced to life imprisonment by a Madikeri court, for murdering a woman using a trishul as part of a black magic ritual in 2015 | P5

Hit by bus, boy walks to school, dies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AT 9.05 am on Wednesday, a 7-year-old boy was hit by a school bus. He was attended to, and offered water, after which he walked to his school. While sitting in the classroom, he collapsed and the teachers who rushed to his aid, observed swelling on his head. The boy, Nitish Kumar, was rushed to a nearby hospital and from there to another hospital. Nitish succumbed to his injuries during treatment at the hospital around 10.45 am.

Nitish is the son of Rajesh and Priya, residents of Munekolalu. The tragic turn of events that led to the boy's death has baffled many. The driver of a private school bus stopped the vehicle after it hit the boy. He gave the boy water to drink and after noticing that Nitish was talking normally, the driver, Vittal, left the place.

The hospital informed the jurisdictional HAL traffic police. Police seized the school bus and arrested the driver.

Dasara jumbo delivers calf at palace; none knew of pregnancy

B K LAKSHMIKANTHA @ Mysuru

TWENTY-one-year-old cow elephant Lakshmi, who is part of a herd of 14 elephants being trained for Dasara Jamboo Savari, was heavily pregnant, and delivered a healthy calf on Tuesday night. But the shocker is that neither the forest department officials and veterinarians nor the mahouts even suspected that she was pregnant until just a few hours before she delivered in the Mysuru Palace premises.

Despite much care and nutrition being given to the 14 elephants being trained for the Dasara Jamboo Savari in Mysuru, forest officials, veterinarians and mahouts failed to realise that one of them was heavily pregnant and subjected to arduous physical training and cannon firing.

Lakshmi was brought to Dasara for the first time in 2017, but she had panicked during the cannon firing and had to be pulled out of the jumbo procession.

Lakshmi's pregnancy went undetected despite the much-publicized care, nutrition and medical attention given to these elephants ahead of the world-famous event scheduled on October 5.

The pregnancy gestation period in elephants is 18-21 months, and wildlife activists have slammed the foresters and mahouts for their negligence in bringing Lakshmi almost at the end of her gestation period to subject her to training since August 7 when she was brought to Mysuru in the first batch of nine jumbos for the training.

It was only on Tuesday afternoon at around 12.30 pm that the mahouts and kavadis noticed changes in Lakshmi's behaviour, which showed discomfort. They informed the foresters and veterinarian who rushed to the spot and conducted a medical checkup. It was then that they suspected that Lakshmi might be pregnant and was suffering from labour pain.

The foresters collected her urine and faeces samples and sent it to a lab in Hyderabad for detecting pregnancy. Meanwhile, they shifted the elephant to a separate enclosure near Brahmapuri Gate of Mysuru Palace and monitored her health and behavior by restricting public entry.

CONTINUED ON: P5

NAMING THE BUNDLE OF JOY

The Mysuru Palace Board is contemplating naming the calf 'Ganapathi', while corporator Lokesh (Piya) and a few associations have demanded that it be named 'Srikantadatta' after Srikantadatta Narashimaraja Wadiyar, the late scion of the erstwhile Mysuru royal family.

Elephant Lakshmi with her newborn male calf on the Mysuru Palace premises on Wednesday | UDAYASHANKAR S